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Sustainable development: Harmony with Nature

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 20 (see A/65/436, para. 2). Action on sub-item (i) was taken at the 28th and 33rd meetings, on 12 November and 1 December 2010. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/65/SR.28 and 33).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.2/65/L.30 and Rev.1

2. At the 28th meeting, on 12 November, the representative of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), also on behalf of the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), subsequently joined by El Salvador, Gabon and Seychelles, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Harmony with Nature" (A/C.2/65/L.30), which read:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "*Reaffirming* the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),
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> "*Reaffirming also* its resolutions 64/196 of 21 December 2009 on harmony with Nature and 63/278 of 22 April 2009 on the designation of 22 April as International Mother Earth Day,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in 10 parts, under the symbol A/65/436 and Add.1-9.

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"*Recalling* the 1982 World Charter for Nature,

"*Recalling also* its resolution 27/2994 of 15 December 1972 designating 5 June as World Environment Day, its resolution 47/193 of 22 December 1992, declaring 22 March the World Day for Water, its resolution 49/114 of 19 December 1994, declaring 16 September the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, its resolution 61/193 of 20 December 2006, declaring 2011 the International Year of Forests, its resolution 61/203 of 20 December 2006, declaring 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, and recalling further its resolution 64/253 of 23 February 2010, entitled 'International Day of Nowruz',

"*Noting* the conclusions of the first Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, held in Tiquipaya, Cochabamba, Bolivia, from 20 to 22 April 2010,

"*Stressing* the importance of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Brazil in 2012,

"*Expressing its concern* over the documented environmental degradation and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity,

"*Recognizing* that gross domestic product is an insufficient indicator for measuring degradation due to the overexploitation of nature,

"*Recognizing* that many ancient civilizations and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

"*Recognizing also* that human beings are an inseparable part of nature and that we cannot damage it without severely damaging ourselves,

"*Recognizing further* the work undertaken by civil society, academia and scientists in regards to highlighting the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts to devise a more sustainable model for production and consumption,

"*Considering* that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

"1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the first report of the Secretary-General on harmony with Nature;

"2. *Invites* the President of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly to convene, on International Mother Earth Day, an interactive dialogue between Member States and recognized experts from different regions and areas of knowledge, including health, humanistic, anthropological and social sciences, to discuss the issue of the rights of nature;

"3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to convene, in consultation with Member States, a group of independent technical experts to further research and devise indicators that better contribute to the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and promote better access to economic performance and social progress in harmony with nature, and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session;

"4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to establish an information portal to gather information, from a sustainable development perspective, regarding activities being undertaken to advance the integration of scientific interdisciplinary work and existing national legislation, with a view to making substantive contributions to the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012, and beyond;

"5. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its sixty-sixth session, a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

3. At its 33rd meeting, on 1 December, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Harmony with Nature" (A/C.2/65/L.30/Rev.1), submitted by the representative of Bolivia (Plurinational State of), also on behalf of Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Georgia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

4. At the same meeting, the Secretary of the Committee orally corrected the revised draft resolution.

5. Also at the same meeting, the representative of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) announced that Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Peru had joined in sponsoring the revised draft resolution. Subsequently, Algeria, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Saint Lucia, Serbia, Solomon Islands and Sri Lanka also joined in sponsoring the revised draft resolution.

6. Also at the 33rd meeting, the Secretary read out a statement of the programme budget implications of the revised draft resolution.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted revised draft resolution A/C.2/65/L.30/Rev.1, as orally corrected (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

8. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Harmony with Nature

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] Agenda 21[2] and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[4] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),[5]

Recalling its resolutions 64/196 of 21 December 2009 on Harmony with Nature and 63/278 of 22 April 2009 on the designation of 22 April as International Mother Earth Day,

Recalling the 1982 World Charter for Nature,[6]

Recalling its resolutions 47/193 of 22 February 1993, in which it declared 22 March the World Day for Water, 49/114 of 19 December 1994, in which it proclaimed 16 September the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, 55/201 of 20 December 2000, in which it proclaimed 22 May the International Day for Biological Diversity, 61/193 of 20 December 2006, concerning the International Year of Forests, and 64/253 of 23 February 2010, entitled "International Day of Nowruz",

Taking note of the first Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth,[7] held in Tiquipaya, Cochabamba, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia from 20 to 22 April 2010,

Stressing the importance of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development that will be held in Brazil in 2012,

Expressing its concern about the documented environmental degradation and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity,

Recognizing that gross domestic product is not an adequate indicator to measure environmental degradation resulting from human activity,

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[6] Resolution 37/7, annex.

[7] See A/64/777, annexes I and II.

Recognizing also that many ancient civilizations and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

Recognizing the work undertaken by civil society, academia and scientists in regard to signalling the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts to devise a more sustainable model for production and consumption,

Considering that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

1. *Takes note* of the first report of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature;[8]

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to convene, at its sixty-fifth session, an interactive dialogue, to be held at two plenary meetings during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 26 April 2011, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other stakeholders, to actively and effectively contribute to and support efforts in the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, on the following topics:

(a) Ways to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature;

(b) Sharing national experiences on criteria and indicators to measure sustainable development in harmony with nature;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund for the participation of the independent experts in the interactive dialogue at the two plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 26 April 2011, and invites Member States and other relevant stakeholders to consider contributing to this fund;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to make use of the existing information portals on sustainable development maintained by the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to gather information and contributions on ideas and activities to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature being undertaken to advance the integration of scientific interdisciplinary work, including success stories on the use of traditional knowledge, and existing national legislation, with a view to making substantive contributions to the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012, and beyond;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-sixth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

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[8] A/65/314.